

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

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BEIJING TODAY

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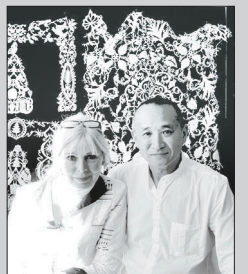
Chopsticks Get Smart for Food Safety

Baidu's gadget meets Chinese demand by promising the impossible: safe food. **Page 4**

Who Wins in the Certificate Scramble?

Mounting scandals make it hard to find the positives in certifications. **Page 5**

Norway and China Meet in Papercraft

Papercut artists from across the world meet to share their craft. **Page 6**

Worst Holiday?

Netizens named Beijing as one of the most crowded and unpleasant places to tour during the National Day break.

Price gouging and crowds all over the country have many would-be travelers choosing to stay home. **Page 3**

Outcry as Rapist Walks Free

BY YANG XIN

The Chongqing police have a message to China's would-be criminals: if you want to rape someone in China, make sure you rape a man.

Little else can be inferred from the Public Security Bureau's decision to drop all charges in an obvious case of sexual assault.

On September 12, a man named Xiao Gang (pseudonym) was walking along Binjiang Lu in Hechuan District, Chongqing when he was suddenly grabbed and forced into an abandoned home on the side of the road and sexually assaulted by Xiao Yong (pseudonym).

Although police arrived and detained Xiao Yong, the man was released with no

charges and only given a stern warning about "improper behavior."

Since the news broke, the case has infuriated commentators and ignited a debate about the country's handling of same-sex rape.

Chinese Criminal Law defines rape as occurring only when a female is forced to engage in sex through threat or violence. When the victim is a male, police either choose not to investigate or detain the aggressor on lesser charges.

Chongqing is not a lone example.

In May 2010, a security guard in Beijing raped a male colleague and was jailed for one year on an assault charge.

In 2011, a male middle school student in Pingnan County, Guangxi Province was kidnapped and raped by a man in his town. The man was charged with

"false imprisonment."

Last year, a man who raped his colleague in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province was jailed in the drunk tank for 14 days before being released.

"In recent years, there are more reports of men facing sexual assault. These cases exert enormous harm on society. The fact that only women can receive legal protection from this crime is unfair," said Ding Jinkun, a lawyer who handles cases at the DeBund Law Offices in Shanghai.

Li Zhenlin, a lecturer criminal justice at East China University of Political Science and Law, said the Criminal Law code could take a lesson from Taiwan.

"Taiwan criminalized all forms of forced sex, regardless of the gender or age of the victim," he said. ■



Comics by Tango (©tango2010)





Photo by focus.21cn.com

Heart Attack Claims Overworked Carriage Horse During Holiday

BY DIAO DIAO

A carriage horse died of exhaustion while pulling visitors uphill on October 2 at the Shenzhen Zoo. The horse was dead in less than a minute of its collapse.

The five passengers in the carriage said they thought the horse died from overwork. A man surnamed Shi who witnessed its death said he was shocked to see it fall to the ground while still wearing its reins. Shi said the horse was extremely thin and its ribs were visible through the skin.

The horse was pulling five passengers at the time of its death.

Shenzhen Zoo staff denied that the horse died from exhaustion. A spokesman

for the zoo said the horse was already 15 years old and may have suffered from a heart or blood pressure condition.

"Sometimes, we just can't tell," he said.

An autopsy found the cause of death to be a heart attack.

A guard at the park who refused to be named told Nandu.com that the carriage was in constant use because of the holiday. "The carriage weighs several hundred kilograms, and even more when filled with passengers," he said.

The carriage was subcontracted to another company which charged 500 yuan to 600 yuan per person for rides during the holiday.

While similar carriages in New York

are forbidden to carry passengers on main thoroughfares due to concerns about animal rights, China still has many places where horses carry heavy passenger loads.

Puzhehei, a famous tourist attraction in Yunnan province, often uses horse-drawn carriages to cart tourists between its distant sites.

Tourists have noted that many of the horses in Puzhehei appear thin and sickly, but local farmer say they have no other way to make money but to use the animals.

The government has occasionally prohibited the use of horse-drawn carriages at scenic locations, but due to tourist demand the practice has never truly disappeared. ■



Strain of New Job Claims Worker

BY ZHAO HONGYI

The strain of a new job proved to be too much for Han Guoqing, a laundry company employee who was recently reassigned to work in a supermarket.

Han was told to keep an eye on the supermarket's parking lot on his first day at work on March 23, 2012. However, shortly after starting the day he fell dead of a heart attack.

His family has been locked in a battle for compensation with the former employers ever since.

Shortly after his death, Han's surviving family members sued the laundry company for negligence. The court initially ruled in their favor, ordering a compensation payment of 500,000 yuan to cover funeral expenses and severance pay.

However, the laundry company appealed, saying Han had never informed it of his heart condition and that it had not been responsible for his death.

The family then sued the supermarket. In a September ruling, the court ordered the supermarket and laundry company to share the burden of the initial 500,000 yuan compensation. ■

Zhejiang Father Faces Murder Charge for 'Missing Daughter'

BY ZHAO HONGYI

When Zhang Sutian disappeared more than a month ago, her father Zhang Jian, 36, was the only one who seemed indifferent to her whereabouts.

Last week, police in the Village of Xiashan in Pingyang, Zhejiang province learned why.

The long-missing 13-year old girl was found dead and submerged in a public toilet opposite her house. Her body had been there for 24 days. Police have since arrested her father on charges of murder.

Zhang Sutian graduated from Daixi Elementary School last year while she was living with her mother. She was expected to continue her studies at Tengjiao No.1 Middle School this year.

"Sutian was very introverted. She didn't really talk with the other students. He scores were average, but she was hard-working," her former teacher said.

Zhang Jian is alleged to have killed his daughter in a rage after he found 240 yuan missing from his wallet. Neighbors said they heard a girl screaming that night, but none went out to investigate.

When neighbors asked where Zhang Sutian had gone, her father replied "she may have left the family" and refused to say more.

After 10 days, Zhang Jian called the police and reported the girl missing. The initial investigation found nothing.

Zhang Jian was living in a big house



Zhang Sutian (left) and her father's home (right).



Photos by Wenzhou Evening News

shared with an elder brother and uncle. He was previously married to a woman from Fujian province who father Zhang Sutian and a boy.

Over the next few years, Zhang's gambling addiction caused their marriage to disintegrate and the two soon filed for divorce. The boy stayed with Zhang while Zhang Sutian went to live with her mother in Fujian.

Zhang Sutian was sent to live with her father during summer vacation, which placed a new financial burden on the family.

"I was supposed to take her to register for the new semester but she never

came back," Zhang told police during initial questioning.

Zhang's brother who lived in a nearby city came back to help look for his niece and was the one who urged Zhang to call the police.

Neighbors described Zhang Jian as "an honest man."

"He doesn't say much, but he's always happy to help people who have a broken down car or any other problems," said Zhang Yongkang, Zhang Jian's uncle.

He said his nephew may have been misled by old concept that "girls are useless." ■



CFP Photo

Woman With Three Husbands Feared 'Being Lonely'

BY YANG XIN

While most of the modern world has decided to favor monogamous relationships, one woman in Nanjing chose another path.

Police arrested Li Xue on September 18 on charges of bigamy after one of her

three husbands learned she was married to two other men.

Li's three worlds of marital bliss fell apart when one of her husbands, Zhou Tong, decided to spend the day cleaning the apartment they shared.

While going through various drawers, Zhou discovered wedding photos of his Li with another man and a bundle of what appeared to be another man's clothes. When Zhou investigated further, he discovered his wife had marital relationships with two other men.

The home that Zhou and Li shared was in fact the property of one of Li's other husbands.

Li's curious approach to cohabitation began in 2003 when she met her cyber lover Chen Bin. Although they planned to wed, Chen's parents were staunchly opposed to the union. Chen decided to settle Li in his spare home in suburban Nanjing.

Feeling lonely, Li continued to look for love online. In 2008, she met and married Zhou Tong. When Chen's parents finally agreed to let him marry Li, the two quickly arranged another ceremony.

But even with two husbands, Li continued her search for other mates. In September 2009, Li met Liu Gang through online dating platform and obtained a marriage license with him using a false identity card.

What's more puzzling is how Li managed to deceive all three of her husbands for four years without any of them realizing.

Li said she took great pains to keep her married worlds separate, going as far as rearranging the house in different layouts whenever each would return. For example, when Zhou Tong came, she would conceal her wedding photos with Liu Gang or Chen Bin and fill the closet with Zhou's clothes.

"I didn't marry them for money. I'm just afraid of being lonely," Li said. "I entered each marriage with true love."

Li is being detained while the police continue their investigation. Her illegal use of a false identity card is also being investigated. ■



10,000 Doves Get Holiday Anal Probe

Someone in the security bureau may have taken the phrase "dropping bombs" to describe bowel movements a bit too literally.

But whether it was a fear of fecal-borne pathogens or bombs of a different sort, government officials had the unenviable job of giving rectal exams to 10,000 doves and cataloging them in advance of the national holiday.

The doves, collected from associations in the districts of Xicheng, Dongcheng, Chaoyang and Fengtai, were selected for release in Tiananmen Square on National Day as part of a ceremony.

(People's Daily)

Women Strip in Subway Promotion

Passengers on Line 2 of the Shanghai Subway got a free striptease courtesy of Shanghai's Tidy Laundry on September 17.

To film its advertisement, the company hired two women to board a sparsely populated train car and disrobe down to their underwear as passengers recorded the scene. Near the end of the finished commercial, a man boards the train to pick up their discarded clothes.

The company said the video was designed to promote its new "service on call" concept.

Metro police said Tidy Laundry will be fined for "disturbing public order." The amount of the fine was not disclosed.

(Shanghai Daily)

Police Raid Elderly Man with Hooker

The Huizhan Public Security Bureau was surprised to find an 85-year-old man struggling to get off the bed when they raided a prostitute's home last month in Daqing, Heilongjiang province.

The man, who was not named, said he had hired the 40-something sex worker when propositioned en route to a nearby medicine store in the Qulin community.

After haggling the price from 100 yuan down to 80 yuan, the man followed the woman back to her apartment but found he didn't have the energy to do anything. The two were talking on the bed when police knocked on the door.

Police released him with a stern warning on account of his age.

(Caijing.com.cn)

Airport Scrambles to Find 'Lost Apples'

A panicked young woman in trendy clothes burst into the security room at the Chongqing Jiangbei Airport on October 2 shouting that her "apples" were stolen when she went to use the restroom.

Judging by her appearance and urgent expression, the police on staff assumed that a bag of expensive laptops and phones had gone missing.

Upon a careful review of the security footage, police learned that the lost apples were of the Fuji variety rather than the smartphone variety.

(Chongqing Morning News)

Tourism Sites Top List of 'Most Unwanted Holiday Destinations'

BY DIAO DIAO

As part of its run up to the National Day, ThePaper.cn conducted a survey to find out which tourism sites Chinese tourists were least interested in visiting during the seven-day break.

Surprisingly, the most unwanted holiday destinations included top-tier cities such as Beijing, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Dalian and Wuxi. The most unwanted cultural sites were The Forbidden City, The Great Wall, Mt. E'mei and Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan province.

One respondent, a girl surnamed Zhang, said the tourism destinations were so crowded she would rather stay home.

Another respondent surnamed Zhang said that holiday admission fees made any travel unattractive. Fenghuang Old Town in Hunan province, for example, cost 148 yuan to enter. While the ticket covers admission to 10 different buildings, all are similar and none are worth the money, she said.

A Beijing woman surnamed Wang who visited Fenghuang said the motel she selected increased its price from 328 yuan to 800 yuan for the holiday. "It's understandable that the prices go up a bit during the holiday, but that increase is ridiculous. Besides, all the business and vendors who came out for the holiday really took away from the beauty of the place," she said.

The Tourism Research Center of the Chi-

nese Academy of Social Science found that more than half of China's 5A tourist attraction have an entrance fee of more than 100 yuan. Some even charge more than 300 yuan.

ThePaper.cn noted that many of these entrance fees do not include transportation within the park area.

Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, said price gouging during the holiday detracts from the festive atmosphere.

As well as the complaints about the cost of admission, many tourists bemoaned the price of food. A woman surnamed Cao from Changsha, Hunan province said she was shocked that three vegetable dishes and a plate of twice-cooked pork cost more than 300 yuan during her trip to Jiangxi.

In Sanya, Hainan province, a tourist surnamed Lu from Shanghai said that he was forced to buy overpriced fish when the waiter killed and scaled it without asking if he wanted it. "He charged me 200 yuan," Lu said.

While most people complained about the crowds and fees, others said they spend their vacations at home because of past bad experiences.

A man surnamed Xu said he was cheated out of 300 yuan by a fake monk at the Famen Temple. Another man surnamed Xiao said the noodles during his trip to Shanxi were "inedible." ■



HOLIDAY Few think it's worth braving the Forbidden City's crowds.

CFP Photo



Baidu Deploys 'Smart Chopsticks' in the Battle for Food Safety

An ambitious new smart device hopes to leverage the market to clean up China's dirty food industry

BY LYNNE WANG

On April 1, Baidu released a video announcing its development of a pair of "smart chopsticks" that could detect gutter oil, the infamous reclaimed cooking oil widely circulated on the black market.

Initially dismissed as a creative April Fool's prank by the IT giant, industry followers were stunned by the serious announcement about its upcoming release.

At the Baidu World Conference on September 3, Baidu officially announced Kuaisou, its upcoming chopsticks that can divine the origins of any food after being paired with a smart device.

"Kuaisou uses highly-sensitive sensors to scan food for the presence of gutter oil, identify the pH value of drinking water and search out the real origins of fruits," said by Robin Lee, the company's CEO.

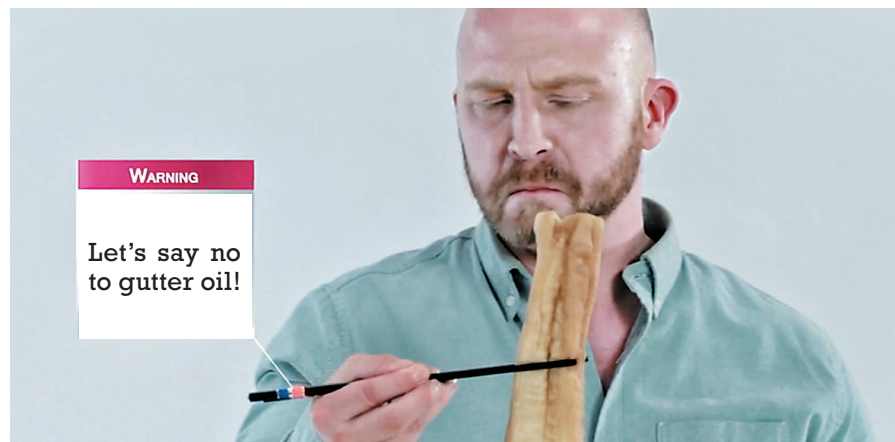
Lee said later features would be able to detect illegal additives in mooncakes and spot milk that has been contaminated with melamine, the industrial compound that injured and killed numerous children when vendors slipped it into baby formula in 2008.

The combination of tableware and digital technology is a bold step, and one that is especially encouraging given the image of Chinese IT firms as copycats.

But whether Baidu Kuaisou is more conceptual than practical is a big question.

While many other "smart" devices have been criticized for trying to meet user demands that don't exist, Kuaisou seems to have struck the Chinese market's demand with the accuracy of an acupuncture needle.

"Waves of smart devices have raised



eyebrows, but few have actually suited users' needs. The design philosophy of Baidu Kuaisou could be regarded as a creative attempt to connect a physical product with an emotional demand," said by Zhao Lei, a writer for *Business Value*.

That "emotional demand" is the expectation of safe food.

In spite of laws and oversight agencies, the Chinese food industry is a wild frontier where dishonest practices pose low risk and offer vast rewards.

In only the last five years, Chinese diners have had to contend with everything from mutton-flavored pork to poisoned milk. However, gutter oil is by far the most heinous.

More than 14 million tons of gutter oil were produced in China last year. Some 3.5 million tons ended up in the hands of small restaurants, according to a study by Zhong Nanshan, a health expert at the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

The distribution of such unsafe prod-

ucts has understandably increased the public's anxiety. The arrival of Kuaisou offers a chance to fix a problem that regulators have been unwilling or unable to tackle, Zhao said.

"If these chopsticks help us to identify and avoid harmful foods, the industry will have no choice but to change its practices if it hopes to stay in business," said a man surnamed Liu who has preordered a pair of Kuaisou.

But critics say Baidu will have a hard time ensuring the accuracy of its newest gadget.

"There is no standard way to test for gutter oil because its composition is so incredibly varied. Simply testing the TPM (total polar materials), the only acknowledged common component of gutter oil, is not scientific," said an insider who refused to be named.

"The TPM of all oils rises significantly when heated," meaning testing the TPM value of prepared food is point-

less, he said.

Identifying the origin of fruits is also problematic, said Fei Xue, a molecular biologist who studies plants. Near infrared sensors might offer some data, but it is impossible to interpret without significant field work to collect and catalog the spectral patterns emitted by fruits grown in different locations, she said.

Users who depend on the unreliable readings could even be placing themselves at greater risk, she said.

The release of Baidu Kuaisou won't make food safer, said Heather Timmons, the technology editor at Quartz. On the contrary, it will only further erode public trust in the domestic food industry, she said.

"Technology exists to simplify problems. What digital devices should focus on is to achieve subtle improvements for a better and healthier life," the *Wall Street Journal* said in an editorial.

Earlier this year, Google announced it had taken over Lift Labs, a tableware firm that is developing a smart spoon. Rather than reshape the entire food industry, Lift Labs has the simpler goal of helping people with Parkinson's disease to eat without embarrassing spills.

The Lift Wear records the frequency of a user's tremors and adjusts itself to vibrate at a similar rhythm. For 70 percent of the users, this helps offset the hand tremors that make dining an embarrassing affair. The Lift Wear can be connected to forks, knives and keys.

Baidu Kuaisou may need to scale back its dreams if it wants to deliver a similarly reliable product. ■



Photos provided by Baidu

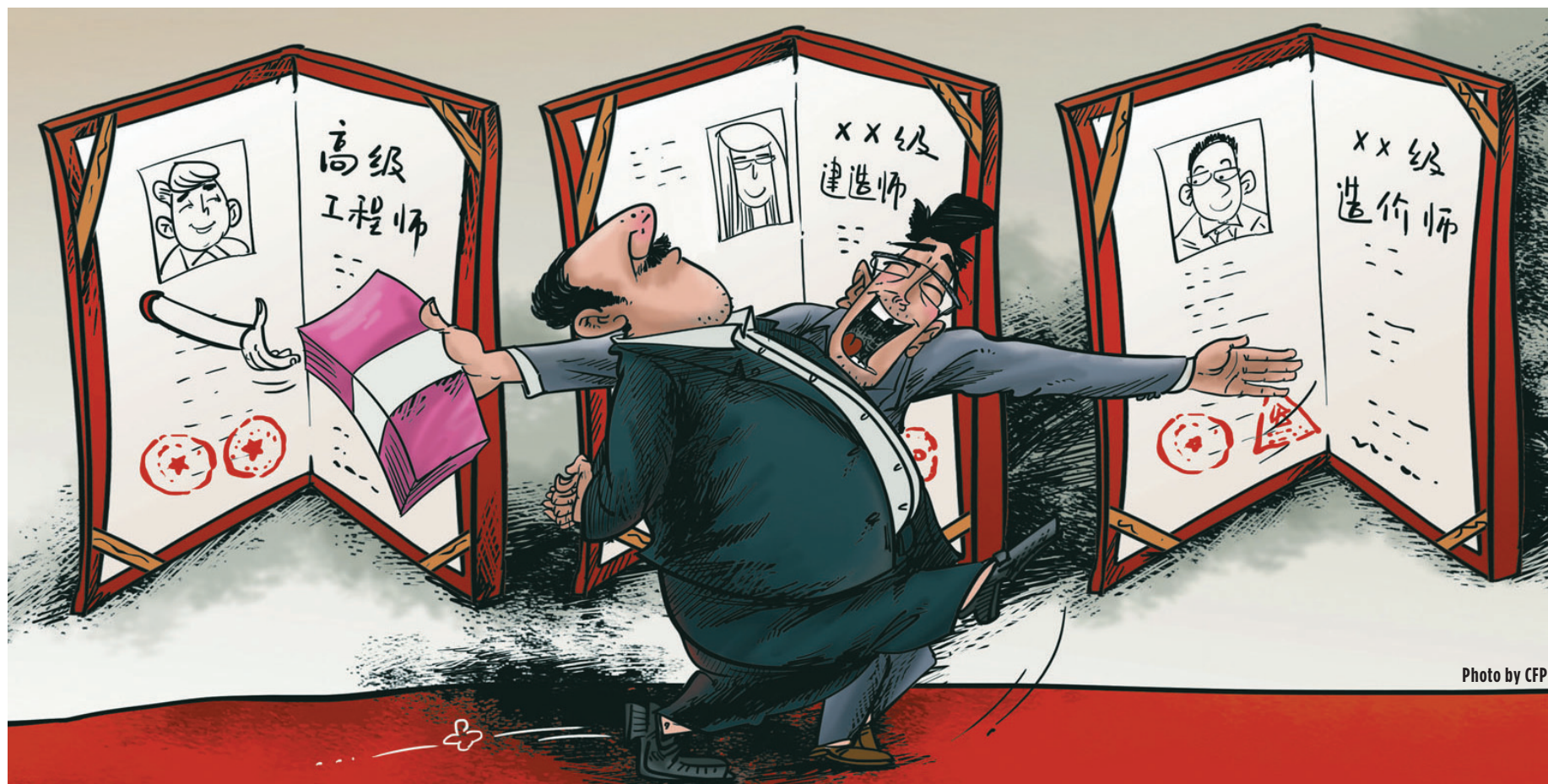


Photo by CFP

Gov Scales Back Certificate Program Amid Scandals

BY LYNNE WANG

Two-hundred-and-thirteen candidates were caught cheating on the National Test of Construction Qualifications in Sichuan province this year.

Created in 1990, the test is part of a vocational qualification system designed to bridge the gap between education and employment. In theory, a passing score ensures employees meet basic skills and encourages them to pursue continued learning.

But rather than objectively gauging professional performance, vocational certificates have become a barrier to promotion and a tool for companies eager to boast about their assets.

Too High a Value

With the real estate industry still expanding at a breakneck pace, construction foremen and project managers are in high demand.

It's no surprise then that the National Test of Construction Qualifications is China's most popular vocational test. More than 1 million people took the exam in 2013.

But in spite of its esteem in the workplace, the national level exam has been sullied by scandal a decade of endless.

In 2006, Song Fulai, one of the authors of the 2005-2006 test, was sentenced to 18 months in prison for selling the exam questions to candidates in Beijing who paid him 16,000 yuan in "lecture fees."

A similar case occurred in Shiyang, Hubei province one year later. Liu Keqi, an official at local Human Resource Bureau, stole the exam outright and sold copies

of it to several training schools. During his confession, Liu said he and his cohorts earned 1.04 million yuan.

Deliberate exposure of the test papers has been increasingly common as candidates buy questions and answers in advance.

According to official data from the Human Resource Bureau of Jiangxi province, 116 people cheated on the National Test of Construction Qualifications in 2010. In Sichuan province, more than 100 candidates were barred from the exam until 2015 when they were caught buying answers last year.

But it's not hard to understand why people cheat so many.

"People certified in construction are needed by both big firms and individual developers," said by an insider who refused to be named.

Firms that endeavor to compete for government contracts are required to have three certificate holders on their team. That demand means anyone certified for construction management can command a high salary.

"Theoretically, obtaining the construction certificate means a salary of no less than 120,000 yuan given the test's low pass rate. A certificate holder employed by a firm can collect 40,000 yuan, even if they aren't showing up for work," *Huaxi Metropolis Daily* said in an editorial.

To some extent, professional qualifications rather than practical ability determine the value of a certified construction manager in the job market. The certificate is a golden ticket – experience and actual qualifications be damned.

Certificate Bias

In reality, the unfair circumstances in professional qualification are only the tip of the iceberg.

A ridiculous number of equally ridiculous qualification tests have flooded the vocational training industry, and all have significantly harmed the credibility and authority of the national examination system.

"The current qualification system is managed by administrative departments rather than experts from the corresponding industries," said by Liu Yanwei, an independent education critic. The public's worship of printed credentials only exacerbates the problem.

"Growing up in an education system built on endless exams leaves a mark," said Chu Hongqi, vice director of the Institute of Beijing Education Science. "Scores and certificates are a significant part of the Chinese experience, and they are the criteria we subconsciously use to judge people."

This is especially true for college students who pursue professional tests that have even less correlation with their majors.

"Even if having a certificate in computer science won't further my career, I feel safe having it since so many of my classmates do. Something is always better than nothing," said by Wei Xiaoxue, a sophomore student of Chinese at Shanghai Normal University.

Employers amplify China's certificate worship, particularly since they promote certificates holders as the strength of their company.

"In many State-owned companies and public institutes, the number of national-level certificates you hold determines your title, your chance at a promotion and your bonus pay," said by Lü Qin, who worked in a State-owned petroleum company for seven years.

Lifelong Learning

Finding a way to break the reliance on certificates and give proper weight to ability and work experience is one of the biggest problems facing Chinese labor.

The State Council recently announced it would cancel 11 types of professional qualifications that have been deemed "unnecessary or obstacles to the healthy development of industry."

Among the 11 nullified certificates are those for real estate brokers and brand managers.

"The clean-up doesn't mean the entire cancellation of professional certificates. Emerging industries and derived professions need a process by which to evolve, so it's never too late to rearrange the related tests as they mature," said Wang Jian, a reporter for *China Science News*.

Instead of seeking specific achievements or markers of career success at specific life stages, the real goal of study and employment should be to develop yourself and understand the world, said by Huang Jian, vice president of Shanghai Municipal Institute for Lifelong Education.

Those whose real goal is knowledge and experience don't need certificates to prove it, he said. ■



EXCHANGE More of Britain's young adults are seeking opportunities in China.

Photo by UVIC

Youth Exchange Program Builds Stronger Sino-UK Relations

Propelled by Generation UK, more and more British are choosing China as a destination for study or work.

BY YANG XIN

The Generation UK program is bringing more British students to China than ever before.

At a reception on September 24, orga-

nizers welcomed new students and discussed the new opportunities for British youth seeking to engage with China through academic study and internships.

"Immersing yourself in a different country and culture is quite important to your future. You are all on the way to study Chinese, but if you choose to use

it, you will be able to reshape your entire life," said Sir Sebastian Wood, the British Ambassador to China.

The ambassador advised incoming students to use the language as much as possible and to interact with locals.

"China is seen as a tough place to work in most British minds. Even though, if you really come here, you'll find Chinese are as courageous as anyone else and have a good sense of humor," Wood said.

Ben Miller, a previous British student, shared his experience working in transnational communications and studying in China. "I came to China mainly to learn Chinese, which I think is becoming an increasingly important language in the world. Being on the Chinese mainland has a very positive impact on one's Chinese abilities," he said.

As a former graduate of Hong Kong University, Miller also values his experience in Hong Kong. "Because of the mix of Chinese and British culture, Hong Kong was easier to adapt to – many of the people spoke English," he said. "The main thing I loved about Hong Kong was how dynamic it was and the friendly welcome of my Chinese classmates."

Miller said he hoped to work in China after graduating – providing that his Chinese is good enough.

Created by the British Council in 2013, Generation UK is the UK's flagship outward mobility campaign. Nearly 5,500 participated this year.

The campaign aims to boost the number of UK students studying and undertaking work experience in China to more than 80,000 by 2020.

The British Council said students who apply for Generation UK internships are placed by CRCC Asia or InternChina, two leading providers of internships in China. It is also working with local organizations such as the Zhejiang Association of Science and Technology and Suzhou Industrial Park to provide further opportunities for students to gain international work experience in China. ■

French Anniversary Brings Cultural Events

BY YANG XIN

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Centre Culturel Francais is presenting a series of cultural activities including an art exhibition, jazz performances and animated movie festival throughout the month.

Li Shuang, a pioneering Chinese female artist who lives in France, will also be exhibiting her collage works from October 11 to 22 at Today Art Museum.

When Li went to France some 30 years ago, she was warmly welcomed by French citizens bearing gifts. During the next two years, Li created many collages using the wrapping papers from those gifts. Her art reflects her passion and enthusiasm for life abroad.

Jazz Season is another highlight of the anniversary. Each year, the French Embassy in Beijing hosts numerous jazz music performances. This year, it has

invited the Emile Parisien Quartet, one of the world's top jazz groups, as well as Florent Daniel Bragg and Laura Bei Ludan, creators of the trio "Soros."

Launched in 2006, the French Animated Movie Festival has become a popular event with French culture lovers and cinephiles. This year, Centre Culturel Francais will bring six animated short films and nine animated movies to Chinese viewers. All movies will be screened with subtitles in both Chinese and English. ■

Centre Culturel Francais

October 1 to 31

Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang

Free

faguowenhua.com/arts-et-culture/musique



Clotilde Rullaoud will be performing in Beijing.



Collage by Li Shuang

Free French classes open to children
Photo by French Embassy in China



Photo by Paperdialogue.com

Sino-Norwegian Cultures Meet in Papercuts

BY YANG XIN

A new exhibition supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy is presenting the works of Chinese and Norwegian artists as part of a dialogue to inspire innovation and collaboration based on common tradition and mutual understanding.

Titled "Paper Dialogues: The Dragon and Our Stories," the exhibition features the amazing papercuts of Qiao Xiaoguang and Karen Bit Vejle. The two artists both seek the dragon in their own cultures and make it come alive in massive papercuts based on significant mythical figures.

Dragons play an important role in Norse mythology and the heroic legends

of Scandinavia. They were long used to decorate both churches and Viking vessels. In China, the dragon has an even longer history and a prominent position with its image appearing in architecture, decor, daily items and festival imagery.

As a traditional Chinese folk art, papercuts are primarily created by women. However, modern employment options have led to fewer women taking up this traditional skill.

In 2009, the Chinese papercut art was named by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage because of its significant role in preserving and conveying cultural identity. Qiao Xiaoguang has been one of the leaders of the

preservation effort.

For the exhibition, Qiao has created a 9-meter-long dragon that can be viewed from either side while Bit Vejle crafted a forest of dragon eggs through which the audience can walk. The forest is part of a light and shadow show.

Both Bit Vejle and Qiao belong to a small group of contemporary artists who are exploring papercuts as a genre. "We are quite different in our style. He uses very masculine expression whereas my papercuts are much more effeminate and ornamented," Bit Vejle said.

The two find kinship through scissors and paper.



Dragon Egg, Karen Bit Vejle's master work

Photo by Today Art Museum

"There is a line connecting China and Scandinavia. On both ends of the line is an artist drawing with scissors. The two are so different, but they find mutual understanding all the same," said Gudrun Eidsvik, the curator.

The exhibition opened at Today Art Museum on October 1. Its next stop will be the Liu Haisu Art Museum in Shanghai before touring Oslo and Trondheim next year. ■

Today Art Museum

⌚ 10 am-6 pm, through October 12

📍 32 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang

💎 Free

Cultural Season Brings Sino-Danish Photographers Together for Exhibition and Exchange

BY YANG XIN

The photography exhibition of the acclaimed Scandinavian photographers Anders Petersen and Jacob Aue Sobol opened last week at Three Shadows Photography Art Center.

Titled "Veins: It's Not about Photography," the exhibition is the latest event in the ongoing Danish Cultural Season in China.

The cultural season is themed "Little Fairytale, Big Future" and will continue through next June with exhibitions, concerts, film festivals, literary seminars and stage performances organized by the Royal Danish Embassy in Beijing, the Danish Ministry of Culture, the Danish Cultural Institute, the Danish Art Foundation and other cultural institutions.

Famous for their personal documentary work, Petersen and Aue Sobol portray

a personal world which may come across as hard and merciless at first glance, but which conceals their zeal, longing curiosity and strong sense of presence.

"Art ties people together and builds bridge between nations. Art instructs us all in a language that anyone can understand and communicate in. Cross-culture dialogues are indispensable in reinforcing bilateral relations," said Marianne Jelved, Denmark's minister of culture.

"The cultural season is expected to provide excellent opportunities for artistic and cultural exchanges between Denmark and China. Meanwhile, we will continue developing a relationship between the two countries' cultural institutions and artists," she said.

Famous for its diversity and inclusiveness, Danish culture has been embraced all over the world through historic cultural



Photo by the Royal Danish Embassy in Beijing

ambassadors such as the famous writer Hans Christian Andersen, Soren Kierkegaard and Carl Nielsen. ■

Three Shadows Art Centre

⌚ 10 am-6 pm, through October 19 (closed Mondays)

📍 115A Caochangdi, Chaoyang

The Past Told by Posters



Photos by Wang Yuqing



BY SHU PENGQIAN

While most people don't give Chinese posters a second thought, Wang Yuqing has dedicated himself to collecting and studying them as historical records.

Often dismissed as propaganda, the posters reveal much about the social culture, economy and politics of modern Chinese history.

Archive of the Ages

Wang Yuqing maintains one of the largest collections of Chinese posters printed between 1912 and 1975, a staggering collection which offers insights into Old Shanghai life and the positive energy that followed the founding of New China.

His posters from Old Shanghai represent one of the first appearances of popular art in China. When the Qing Dynasty was forced to open Shanghai as a treaty port after the first Opium War (1840-1842), the city began modernizing at a breakneck pace.

The calendar pictures were originally created as advertisements for foreign commodities. Most feature beautiful young models with dates marked in both the Chinese and Gregorian calendars. The remainder of the poster area is used to introduce products.

Drawn in by the attractive young women, Shanghai's residents embraced the calendars and quickly spread them to Chinese communities abroad.

The style, which depicts women with egg white skin, was the invention of Chinese painter Zheng Mantuo. In 1914, Zheng applied watercolor painting tech-

niques to create *Wan Zhuang Tu*, the first calendar picture. From then on, the brushwork was copied to develop more posters.

As the market evolved the advertisements changed. Images of happy families replaced charming ladies in the Republican era. Eventually, the style faded from popularity and the painting techniques were lost, Wang said.

In the new era, the Old Shanghai calendars gave way to political posters with exaggerated features. In *Huasheng Chuang*, a fat boy is seen swinging on a massive peanut as a sign of agricultural abundance.

During the Great Leap Forward, the posters shifted from showing blissful liberated families to dependable workers and farmers.

Fading History

For various reasons, well preserved original posters are hard to come by. Most sold in the markets are modern fakes or copies that lose the stories that gave the propaganda context, Wang said.

To share his collection and the history behind the art, Wang held an exhibition at Beijing Dezi Art Center in June and July.

"At present, the price of these posters is not even close to their real value. I think one day the world will recognize their real value," he said. As an accurate record of historical attitudes rather than circumstances, the posters represent an element that is often lost in historical studies.

Compiled over the last 24 years, Wang's collection of nearly 4,000 posters offers a rare bridge to China's recent past. ■

